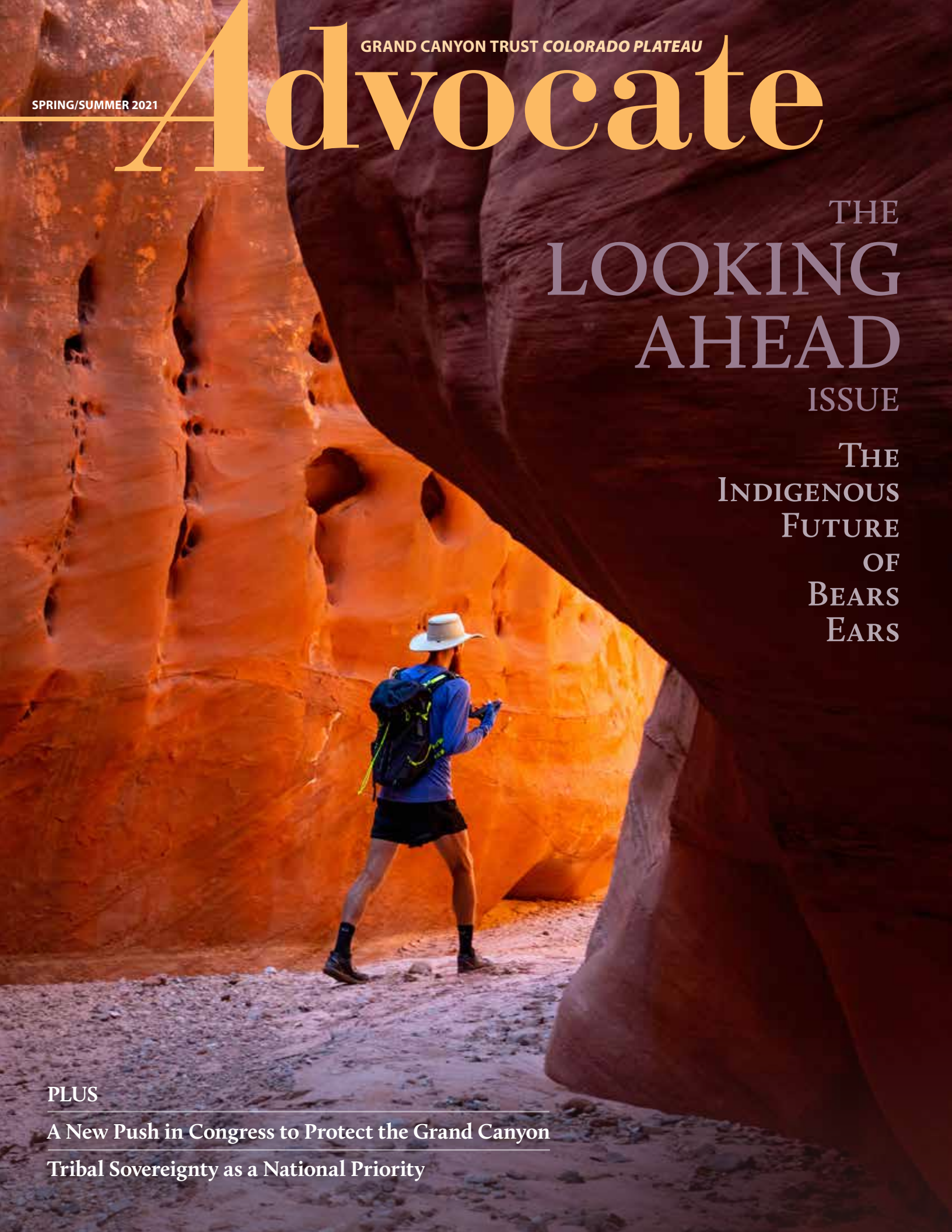
GRAND CANYON TRUST *COLORADO PLATEAU*

Advocate

SPRING/SUMMER 2021



THE LOOKING AHEAD ISSUE

The Indigenous Future of Bears Ears

PLUS

A New Push in Congress to Protect the Grand Canyon

Tribal Sovereignty as a National Priority

Letter from the BOARD CHAIR

JIM ENOTE

Welcome, friends. I am profoundly honored to serve as the new chair of the board of the Grand Canyon Trust. My sincerest appreciation goes out to Steve Martin, our previous board chair, for his leadership in helping to place the Trust in a healthy financial and organizationally competent place. We have a well-provisioned ship, and the crew is serious and capable.

Against the backdrop of a challenging year for humankind, we bid farewell to a tumultuous 2020 and enter 2021 energized with a rotation of seasons, a rollout of COVID-19 vaccines, and a meaningful change in the White House and the Department of the Interior. Indeed, I believe the sails are shifting toward a bright horizon.

In this issue of the Advocate, Grand Canyon Trust staff, trustees, and fellow proponents illuminate several topics critical to the Colorado Plateau. These include the Biden-Harris administration and what it means for the Trust, Native American perspectives and areas of focus, and the history and outlook for public lands. In these pages you'll hear from Rep. Raúl Grijalva on the Grand Canyon Protection Act, Superintendent Ed Keable on Grand Canyon National Park, as well as updates on restoration at Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, and a tribute to our friend and colleague Roger Clark.

With the wind at our backs, we are ready to meet the plateau's complex environmental, social, and economic realities head-on. Halting uranium mining around the Grand Canyon, seeking carbon neutrality, and assuring safe and clean water for all dependent life-forms are just a few important goals we aim to accomplish.

Additionally, the closing of the Navajo Generating Station emphasizes the need for sustainable, well-paying green jobs for tribal nations throughout the plateau to replace ill-planned developments. We cannot approach these resolutions in isolation, and we will not overlook the reality of economic geography, tribal sovereignty, and complicated political authorities and jurisdictions. With our first-rate staff, the Trust is in an excellent position to carry out forward-thinking partnerships and enterprising conservation.

A critical part of our work is to create a more informed citizenry. With this Advocate in hand, I hope you will feel more enlightened and inspired to continue standing with the Grand Canyon Trust.

Sincerely,

Jim Enote
Chair, Grand Canyon Trust Board of Trustees

OUR MISSION
To safeguard the wonders of the Grand Canyon and the Colorado Plateau, while supporting the rights of its Native peoples.

ON THE COVER
Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.
BLAKE MCCORD

EDITOR'S NOTE
The views expressed by the contributors in this issue are solely their own and do not necessarily represent the views of the Grand Canyon Trust.

ONLINE BONUS

Havasu Falls, Havasupai Reservation.
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Fly Over Havasu Canyon

Join EcoFlight for a flight over Havasu Canyon and Canyon Mine as Carletta Tilousi of the Havasupai Tribal Council explains why uranium mining doesn't belong near the Grand Canyon.

Climb aboard:
grandcanyontrust.org/FlyHavasuCanyon

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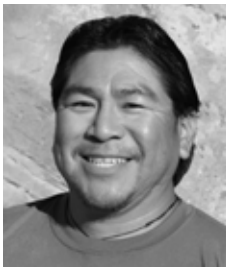


TIM PETERSON

MICHAEL QUINN, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

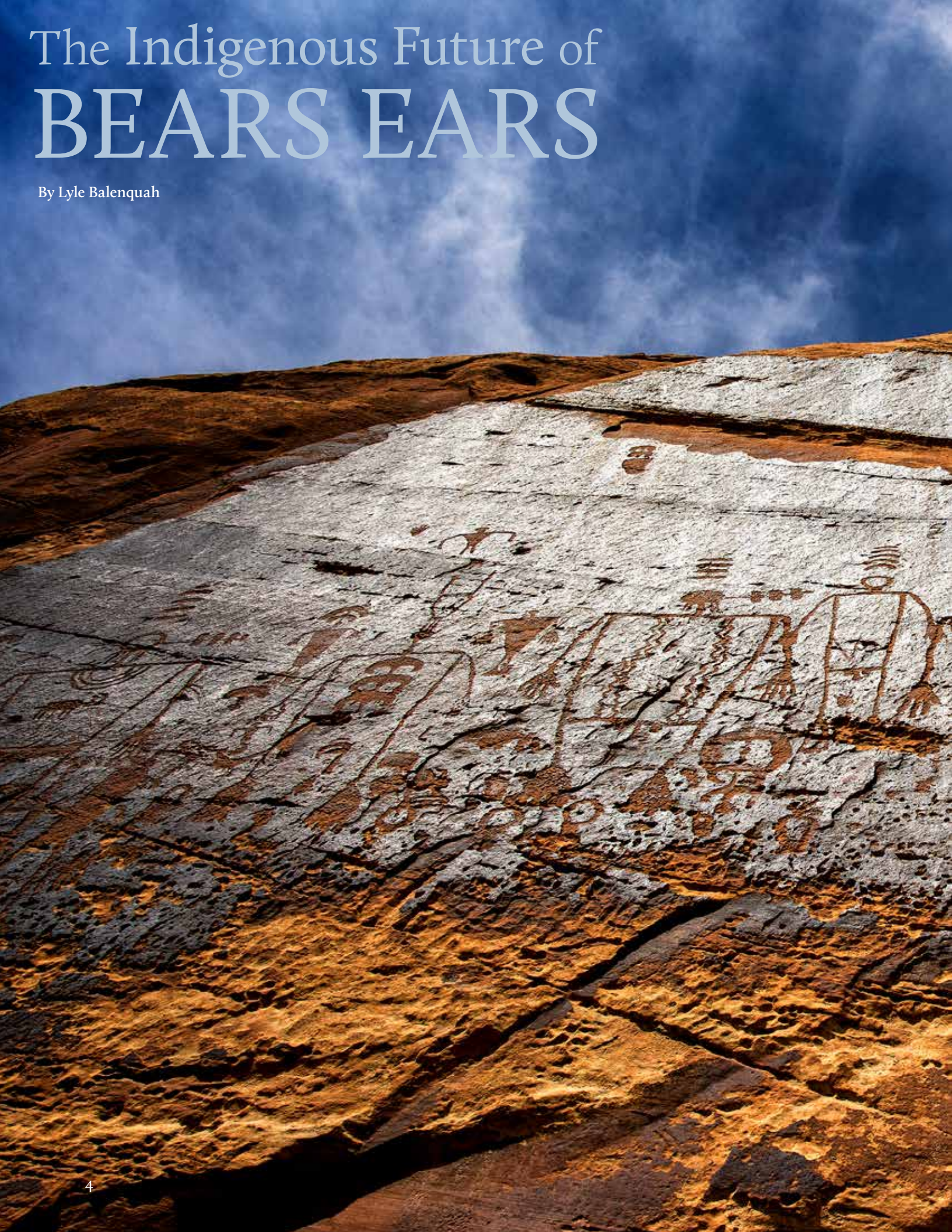
RAYMOND CHEE

RICK GOLDWASSER

PLUS

The Indigenous Future of BEARS EARS

By Lyle Balenquah



The perspective that follows is in no way meant to be a formal declaration of the Hopi Tribe, nor am I a tribal employee or attempting to speak for all Hopi people or Indigenous cultures. I am a Hopi person who has worked as an archaeologist for over 20 years, and part of my fieldwork is conducted in the Bears Ears National Monument. I speak and write from my own experiences first and foremost.

Basketmaker figures in Butler Wash, southeast Utah. TIM PETERSON

The Bears Ears buttes, Bears Ears National Monument. TIM PETERSON

Other factors influence my perspective, including the fact that my mother is from the Greasewood (Dep'wungwa) Clan, and my father is of the Rattlesnake (Tsu'wungwa) Clan, both from Paaqavi (Reed Springs) Village on Third Mesa of the Hopi Reservation located in northeastern Arizona. Acknowledging this lineage establishes a connection to Hopi ancestors who once inhabited various regions of the Southwest. In truth, when we conceptualize our history, we always begin in the present and work back to previous generations.

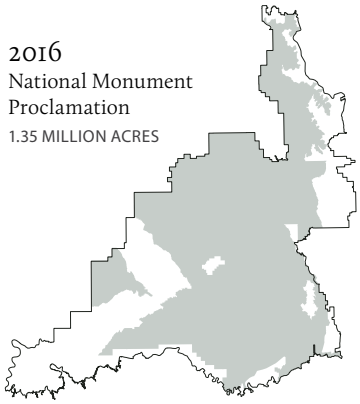
This is based on the Hopi perspective that we are a *living* culture, not simply rooted in some ethnographic past of a black-and-white photograph. The knowledge of our history manifests in the present amongst the Hopis who retain and continue to use such information in our daily and ceremonial lives. This is evident in many forms within traditional Hopi culture: the crops we grow and eat, the art we create, the ceremonies we enact, the spaces we worship in, and the language we speak. All of which is really an accumulation of ancestral Hopi experiences, learned over countless generations.

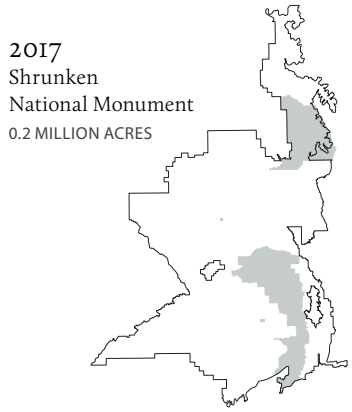
My own ancestors once lived in and along the rivers, canyons, and mesas of the Bears Ears before setting upon epic migrations that brought us to our current homelands. For generations they inhabited these areas and left evidence of their presence in the form of ancestral villages, rock art, artifacts, shrines, and burials. This tangible proof forms the "footprints" of Hopi ancestry that I now strive to learn from and document through my archaeological work. Additionally, there are many other Hopi clans, Pueblo groups, and tribal nations who can trace their ancestral lineage to this landscape. Some still reside in this region, continuing an unbroken line of Indigenous presence. We have always been here.

Although many tribes have ties to the Bears Ears, their connections and history in the region are often challenged due to the imposition of historical land designations. For Hopi, we must acknowledge that our current reservation is over 200 miles south of the Bears Ears region. For some, that means we should have no say in how those lands are managed. In Western concepts of land ownership, if you don't have legal title to the earth you claim, you literally have no ground to stand upon. This practice is the means by which much of the lands of this country were stolen from Indigenous peoples, supported by the 19th century ideology of "Manifest Destiny."

The generalization of federal lands as "public lands" also has detrimental impacts on Indigenous connections to ancestral landscapes, effectively erasing centuries of Indigenous use and presence across millions of acres.

Left: Slickhorn Camp, San Juan River. TIM PETERSON Right: An artifact spotted among the rocks on lands removed from Bears Ears National Monument in 2017. MARC COLES-RITCHIE



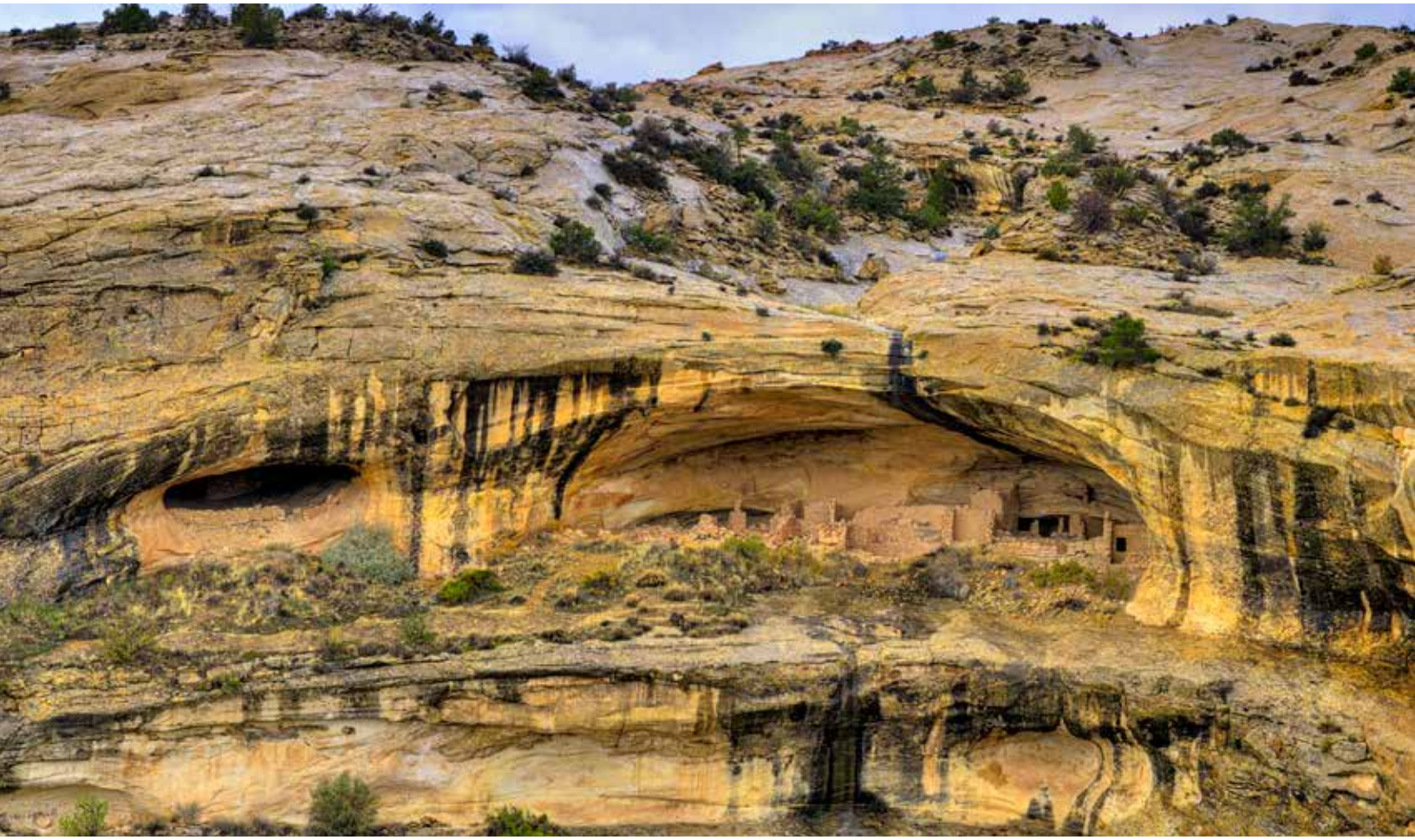


An underlying theme of this concept implies that because Indigenous people are no longer "found there," they have no interest in or connection to those landscapes. This often results in the removal of Indigenous people from the current processes of federal land management. Regardless of these obstacles, Indigenous peoples continue to fight to maintain their respective stewardship values of these lands.

My introduction to the Bears Ears region began over a decade ago when I started working as a guide on the San Juan River, which forms portions of the southern boundary of the Obama-era monument designation. More recently, I have added archaeological fieldwork in areas north of the river to my experiences. This work comprises a full spectrum of documentation: surveying and mapping of ancestral village sites, artifact analysis, conducting condition assessments, and in some cases, subsequent stabilization of architectural materials that have stood for 1,000 years or more.

I work alongside other archaeologists. Some are Indigenous, but not many. Our crews are neither numerous nor large. The sites we work on have not been assessed in decades, or perhaps never at all. Our work helps to establish baseline information that gives us a "snapshot" in time of a specific site, its associated artifacts (if there are any left), and the overall state of the surrounding environment. This data will aid current and future archaeologists and land managers in tracking overall site conditions in the long term. We also record detailed information about visitor impacts occurring at sites, which have increased substantially over the past few years, in large part due to increased publicity and social media. These impacts highlight the current lack of funding and personnel devoted to the overall management of this landscape.

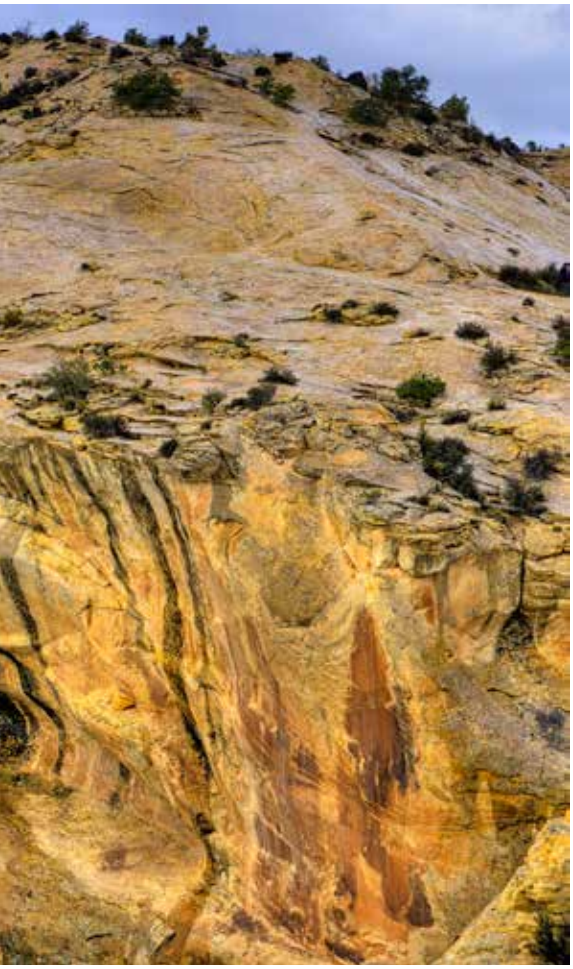
There are other researchers, volunteers, and conservation groups working to educate the public on "visit with respect" etiquette, as well as documenting all aspects of the Bears Ears National Monument, including paleontology, geology, hydrology, flora, fauna, and forest and range management. Expanding our Indigenous and scientific understanding of the Bears Ears must remain a high priority among land managers.



The process of learning about our Indigenous history in the Bears Ears provides opportunities to strengthen the foundations of our cultures, not only in the historical sense of who we once were, but also how we self-identify in the present and into the future.

The process of learning about our Indigenous history in the Bears Ears provides opportunities to strengthen the foundations of our cultures, not only in the historical sense of who we once were, but also how we self-identify in the present and into the future. Personally, can I still call myself a "Hopi" if I let the evidence of how we *became* Hopi be forever lost or forgotten? Or do we step up and actively work to protect and preserve those foundations? When it comes to the Bears Ears, Indigenous people as a whole are choosing to pursue the latter action.

This work is being led by the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, comprised of the Hopi Tribe, Navajo Nation, Pueblo of Zuni, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, and Ute Indian Tribe. This coalition, including other tribal nations and their allies, is fighting to ensure that the Indigenous presence in this region remains at the forefront, despite the fact that Indigenous connections to the Bears Ears landscape are repeatedly questioned or denied outright. This has taken form in acts of systemic racism, political gerrymandering, and attempts to minimize tribal involvement in land-management policy directly related to the Bears Ears National Monument. The reduction of the tribally endorsed Obama monument designation by the Trump administration was yet another attempt to silence the Indigenous voice.



Left: Alcove in Butler Wash, Bears Ears National Monument. TIM PETERSON Above: Preparing traditional foods at the annual Bears Ears intertribal summer gathering. TIM PETERSON

We now have new leadership in the country. We have an Indigenous woman, Deb Haaland, from the Pueblo of Laguna, as secretary of the interior. Among her first tasks will be to oversee a review of the Bears Ears National Monument reduction, and hopefully a reinstatement of the Obama designation of 1.35 million acres, if not the original tribal coalition proposal of 1.9 million acres. If this becomes reality, what then?

Well, the work continues. To what degree remains unknown and is dependent upon whether or not additional funding and personnel are provided for the management of the reinstated monument. If the tribal coalition and its allies are to have any chance of success, sustained resources need to be directed to their efforts. Simply reversing Trump's decision is not enough. Tribes must have a lead role in the development of land-management policy, especially when the land base encompasses large parts of our ancestral history and self-identity. Furthermore, any monument advisory committees must include tribal representatives that are chosen by the tribes themselves, not by outside interests. The inclusion of Indigenous stewardship values within these decisions is long overdue.

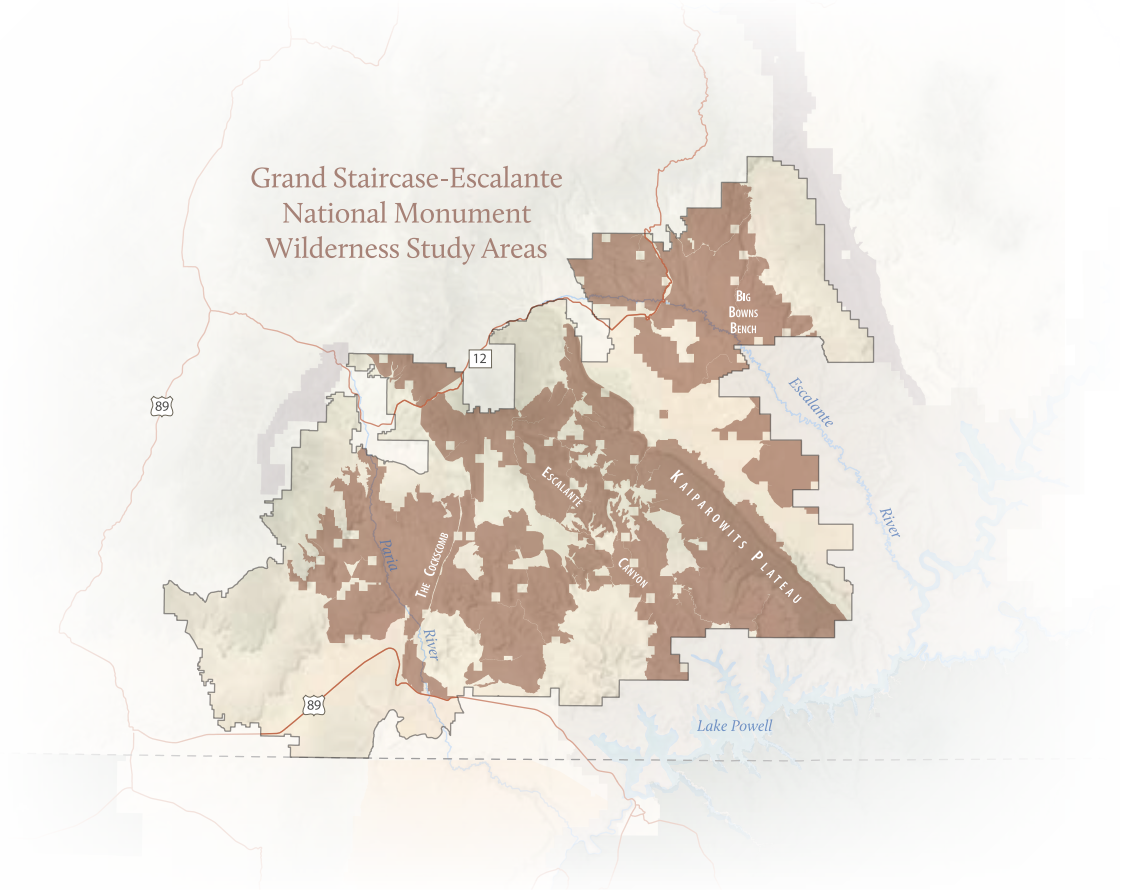
I have hopes that programs will be developed that allow for tribal members to reconnect with and strengthen their cultural connections to this landscape. This should include creating space for the recruiting and training of future Indigenous "scientists" that builds upon the work we do now. This also needs to include opportunities for our tribal advisors and elders to conduct formally supported field visits to these areas, not only to reaffirm cultural histories, but then also to teach that information back to their communities. As Indigenous people we need to retain control over our histories and be able to learn amongst ourselves in accordance with our own cultural practices.

We also need to engage in meaningful collaboration with our non-Indigenous counterparts in science and land administration. I have seen from my own work the benefits that can result from these partnerships. If formal consultation with tribes is to be effective, it needs to start from the very beginning, in the field, and not after management plans are already written. These types of efforts will ensure that Indigenous knowledge and values become established and maintained within policies directed toward our ancestral lands.

Yes, there is a lot of work to be done, and we are only just beginning the many steps in this journey. Our endeavors entail more than drawing a line on a map to protect a fragile ecosystem from the development of the fossil fuel industry. It's about more than protection of archaeological sites from wanton vandalism or preservation of these sites for solely scientific purposes. Protection of this landscape grants us the opportunity to share with the outside world that we are more than historical footnotes, to show that our ties to ancestral lands traverse distance and time. At the heart of our efforts lies an inherent act of respect, honoring our ancestors and maintaining our living cultures, while providing forthcoming generations their own cultural ground to stand upon. This is the Indigenous future of Bears Ears.

Lyle Balenquah works as an archaeologist and outdoor guide throughout the Southwest. Follow his work online at From the Earth Studio fte-studio.com

A GRAND RETURN



Grand Staircase was created as "the science monument." It's time to make real restoration happen.

By Carolyn Z. Shelton

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument lies not far beyond my back door. I walk up an arroyo, seeking quiet and open space, seeking beauty. Here I restore myself. Sheer red sandstone walls, alcoves, and sand dunes stand frozen in deep time. But perhaps my favorite are lichens. Some grow less than one millimeter per year—the thickness of a credit card. Living from 500 to 5,000 years, these gloriously beautiful botanical creatures amaze me. Why do they thrive here? Because perfect conditions collide: superbly clean air, a rocky perch, and little to disturb their life's journey through time. The land is alive. Anyone who spends time in wild places knows this.

A good part of this place remains wild and mostly undisturbed. Consider the original 1.9 million acre national monument: nearly 882,000 acres (about 47 percent) of Grand Staircase lie in wilderness study areas. Wilderness study areas are undeveloped public lands found to have wilderness characteristics and managed to preserve their natural conditions until legislation releases or further protects them. But most people who visit Grand Staircase would agree, the entire monument is wild, a rare commodity in this day and age.

In 1996, President Clinton established Grand Staircase as the first national monument managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), an outdoor laboratory with a unique mission of conducting science, research, and education in order to protect, conserve, and restore this unique place. This monument would become the first of many codified by Congress into law in 2009 as part of the National Landscape Conservation System. These crown jewels of the public lands would become known as the "National Conservation Lands."

This massive inventory job is still unfinished, with some plant, animal, and insect species, as well as fossils, unnamed and not yet identified by science.

Granary vault in the monument. TIM PETERSON
Utah Public Lands Director Mike Popejoy surveying conditions along the Escalante River corridor in the monument. BLAKE MCCORD
One of the monument's smaller inhabitants BLAKE MCCORD

With great enthusiasm I moved from my own interpretive consulting business in Seattle to Kanab in 2001, to be a part of foundational development of the BLM's first national monument. For several years I led exhibit design and construction for four new visitor centers in surrounding communities. But love of the red rock is powerful. I moved into management for the last nine years of my career, trying to support and rebuild a strong science and visitor services program. I retired on my birthday in the summer of 2016.

National monuments like Grand Staircase are created by executive order through presidential proclamation. In particular, "objects" named in the proclamation must be protected, as required by a law called the Antiquities Act of 1906. And further, we must manage this vast and complex place so that our uses don't degrade these objects.

Soon after designation rose a great tide of science and research directed toward understanding this little-known region, the last place mapped in the continental United States. Intensive baseline studies began, simply to identify what is here. This massive inventory job is still unfinished, with some plant, animal, and insect species, as well as fossils, unnamed and not yet identified by science.

Why focus on science and research at Grand Staircase? We do science and research to better understand and inform our actions, like on-the-ground management. And research, both basic and applied, helps contribute to knowledge in all of the fields for which Grand Staircase was established: geology, paleontology, archaeology, history, and ecology. Other aspects of research, like having reference areas, doing long-term monitoring, and conducting relevant analysis, all contribute solid evidence for making land-management decisions.

There is good reason for both observation and experimentation in this outdoor laboratory. Various land-management restoration techniques could be tried here, while carefully documenting their progress, successes, and failures. This vast landscape of native pinyon, juniper, and sagebrush could also serve as a carbon sink in our fight against climate change.

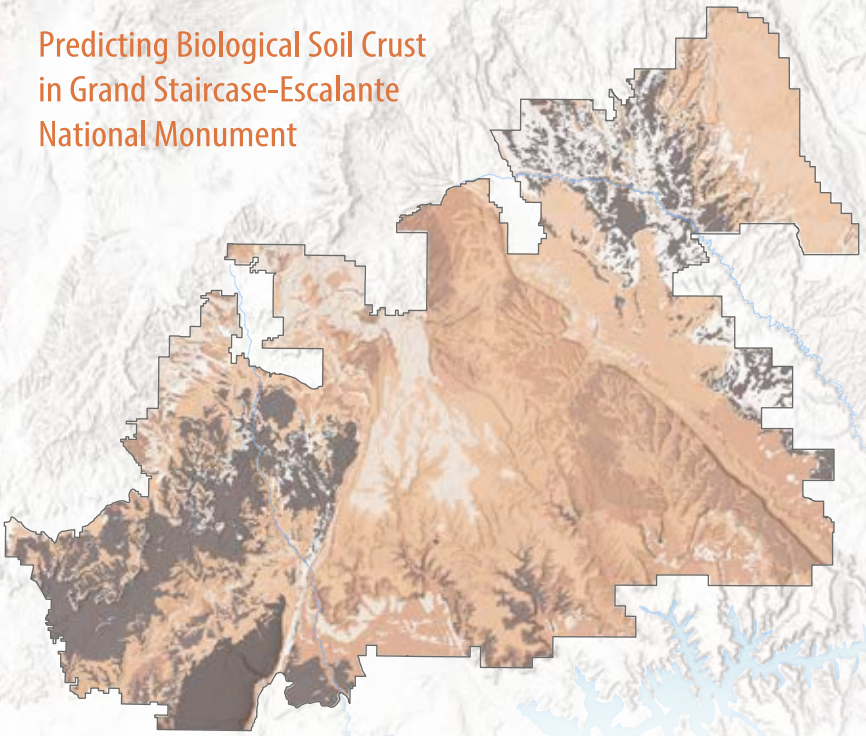
In an example of basic research, paleontologists study prehistoric plants that lived during times of great climatic variation. Although this research isn't solving an immediate land-management problem at Grand Staircase, it might someday help us better cope with climate change in the future, and help struggling plants and animals adapt.

Applied research can directly help public-land managers make decisions now. Ecologists study biological soil crusts, a unique lifeform identified as an object to be protected in the 1996 presidential proclamation. They examine their composition, how they function to fight erosion, their interplay with air, soils, microorganisms, wildlife, and other plants. Better understanding these soil crusts helps managers do a better job with grazing and recreation in Grand Staircase, so as not to destroy this keystone lifeform of the Colorado Plateau.

It is important to foster both basic and applied research. Land-management agencies almost exclusively fund and support applied management; in the early years at Grand Staircase, we funded both.

Even though Grand Staircase was established to protect myriad special objects and resources, the biggest

Predicting Biological Soil Crust in Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument



Low — High

Biological Soil Crust Potential

Data source: Matthew Bowker, Ph.D.

JONATHAN BARTH

challenge lies not with biological soil crusts, threatened, endangered, or endemic plant and animal species, like the Kodachrome bladderpod, or fragile geologic formations. It is the increase in human population and human desires that substantially impacts wild places. Perhaps the way we view the land leads to trouble. To cope and to better understand these conflicts, I've been reading some classics during COVID-19 isolation. Remember Aldo Leopold's "A Sand County Almanac"? Published in 1949, Leopold starts out saying, "Conservation is getting nowhere because it is incompatible with our Abrahamic concept of land. We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a commodity to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect."

In December 2017, President Trump reduced the boundaries of Grand Staircase by nearly 50 percent. Subsequently, the BLM wrote a management plan that treats areas cut from the monument as no more special than "regular BLM." I believe this was done with intent to make the National Landscape Conservation System fail and to placate local special interests.

However, the nation's public lands belong to all Americans, and National Conservation Lands *are* special. That's why they were designated as national monuments and other protected areas. They deserve to be treated in a special manner, under the National Landscape Conservation System requirements of protection, conservation, and restoration. Many groups immediately went to court to fight for return to the rightful Grand Staircase boundaries, including the Grand Canyon Trust, Grand Staircase Escalante Partners, The Wilderness Society, and the Society for Vertebrate Paleontology.

Therein lies the role of every American, not just environmental groups. These special places are our unique heritage, and if we don't fight for them, we will lose them, as we saw in December 2017 when then-President Trump removed special protections for over 2 million acres of Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears national monuments. What happens to one can happen to any public lands, including places within the national park and national wildlife refuge systems. And, if you visit these landscapes, you'll see there is substantial healing that needs to happen for these lands to be truly healthy again.

What does it mean to help the land heal? Technically, this is called "restoration." Restoration means the return of entire system functions prior to disturbance. Think about it. Once we "paved paradise and put up a parking lot,"—as Joni Mitchell put it —it's incredibly difficult to go back to the wildflower meadow or juniper forest with thick biological soil crusts beneath. Returning a natural array of plant and animal associations, healthy soils, wildlife, insects, myriad microbial life, and water flows to a disturbed area is more than a job for humans! However, in partnership with nature, we see success over time.

The BLM and U.S. Forest Service call particular kinds of vegetation removal "restoration." Manipulating the landscape for further commodity

The visible effects of restoration over time. GRAND STAIRCASE ESCALANTE PARTNERS

production, such as ripping out native pinyon, juniper, and sagebrush and replacing them with non-native species like crested wheatgrass provides cattle with high-protein forage. But it is *not* restoration. This kind of land manipulation requires repeat treatments every five to 15 years. This is expensive, labor intensive, and not sustainable on its own.

On Grand Staircase, over 96 percent of the land can be grazed, so the incentive to provide better forage for cows is high. But these aggressive treatments over tens of thousands of acres cause irreparable damage to legally protected objects like biological soil crusts and archaeological sites. And because of persistent drought conditions, many treatment areas remain choked with tumbleweeds and cheatgrass, unproductive for cattle or anything else.

Another common technique is putting native or non-native vegetation back in a disturbed area to stabilize and keep it from further degrading. This is not restoration, but simply revegetation.

Threats come in many forms. Our first and most important task must be to cause no more harm. If we don't pave paradise, we don't have to try to restore it. But here in the West, we have caused harm, and so we need to work toward real restoration. We need to work with the land until natural ecosystem processes can sustain themselves. And we've seen successful restoration at Grand Staircase.

In the early 1900s, the highly adaptable and invasive Russian olive was introduced in the Great Plains and the Southwest to prevent erosion, serve as windbreaks, and provide wildlife habitat. Unfortunately, it got out of control, choking out native plants along rivers and streams and "spreading like a botanical wildfire," as noted by monument researcher Paul Evangelista. Less than 1 percent of total monument lands are ecologically valuable areas along streams or other water sources. The loss of native plants and animals and natural hydrologic systems, like annual flooding in these fragile areas, demanded attention.

Enter the Escalante River Watershed Partnership (ERWP). Now in its 12th year, ERWP is a model of how government agencies and the private sector can cooperate to help the land heal. Over 90 miles of critical river corridor are now free of invasive Russian olive. Young Conservation Corps members, including Native American and underserved groups, accomplish the physical work. Since 2009 they have contributed over 200,000 hours of hard work, immersed in the grandeur of red rock canyons, while learning about ecology. In 2012, ERWP was acknowledged by then-Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell as one of the top river-restoration projects in the nation. Although a great accomplishment, the work is far from done.

We know that a healthy environment provides us food, water, and oxygen. But vast, wild places like Grand Staircase provide much more. They are a refuge for fellow creatures that share our planetary home, and a refuge for us to find solace and connection to something deep and meaningful. I believe there is merit in protecting a place for its intrinsic values.

As if the political climate isn't challenging enough, the actual climate poses far greater dangers. We need to question "best practices" in the current environment of climate change and instability, not just at Grand Staircase, but across the country.

Fire is rampant in the American West. In December 2020, the BLM approved what can only be described as a scorched-earth policy, all in the name of restoring ecosystem health, preventing wildfire, and protecting the iconic and threatened sage grouse. Current proposals to clear-cut native pinyon and juniper exacerbate the problem. These low-fire-risk forests and sagebrush steppe have been here for thousands of years. When these highly adapted plants are removed, soils erode and flammable fuels like invasive tumbleweed and cheatgrass grow with vigor. Cattle selectively eat any native woody plants and wildflowers, especially vulnerable in spring when they try to set seed to reproduce.

Allowing large and controversial vegetation removal projects to occur on public lands across 223 million acres in six western states, without involving the public or the scientific community, is simply bad management. At present, Grand Staircase is vulnerable.

Grand Staircase is too precious to allow it to degrade further. President Biden can restore the original boundaries of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, and with it clear instructions to protect, conserve, and restore this place through a science-based process.

The real question is: Can we change our way of thinking, acting, and being? This requires understanding that for humans to survive, everything is not about us. We have not been on this planet very long, and our time may be even shorter if we don't respect those creatures that have come before and still live among us. Perhaps at Grand Staircase, we can fulfill the vision of better understanding this complex web of nature and sharing what we learn with everyone.

It is time to engage people who have informed perspectives and close connections to the land. It is time to listen to scientists, as they relate what they observe. It is time to listen to Indigenous voices as we begin to allow this place to be truly restored. Restoration will happen on many levels, and we will all be better for it.

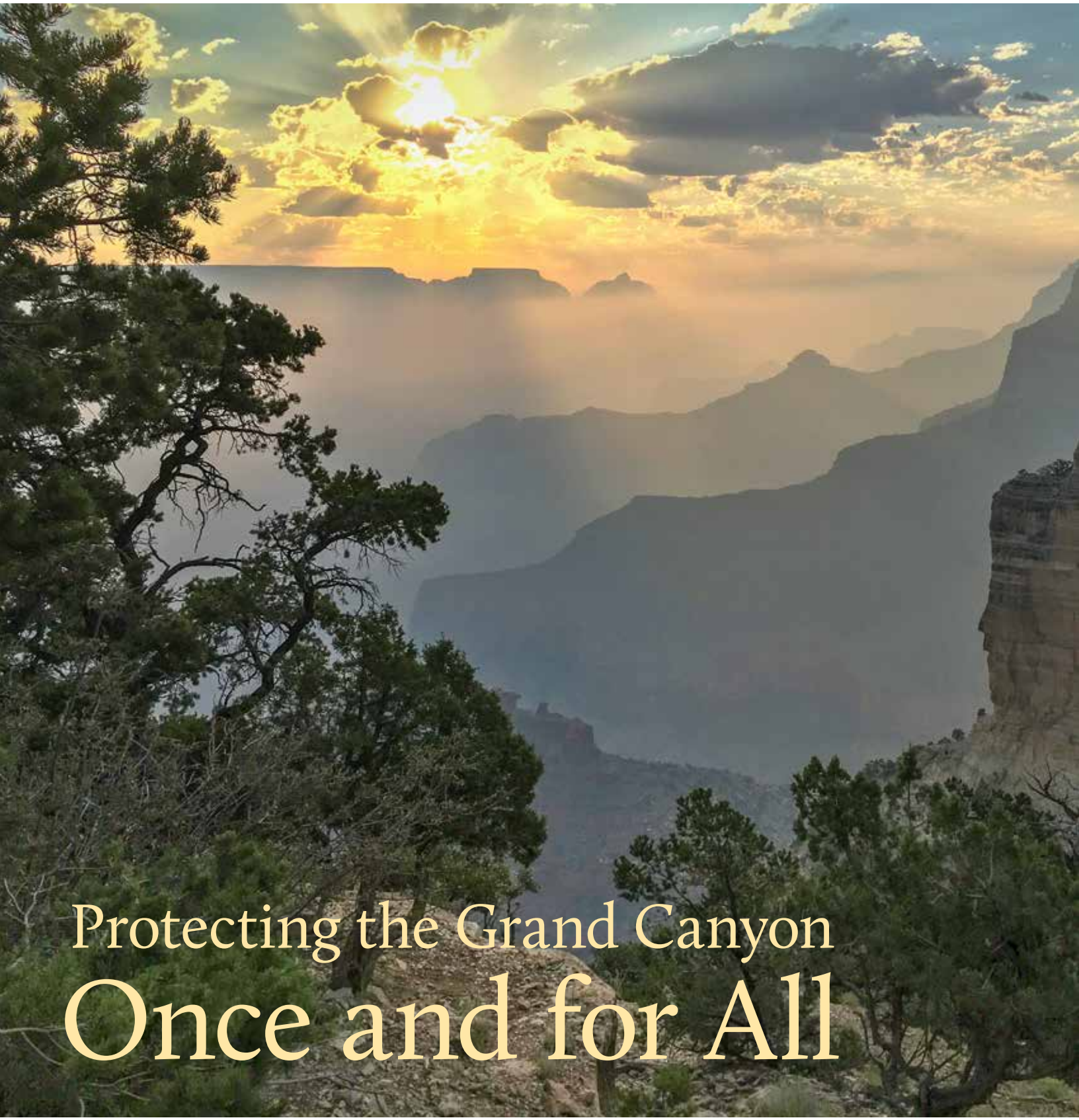
Carolyn Z. Shelton cherishes the wild public lands behind her house every day. She currently serves on the board of directors of Grand Staircase Escalante Partners, the friends group that advocates for Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

ONLINE BONUS

Digital Archive

To learn more about Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, check out the digital research library online at Southern Utah University's Sherratt Special Collections. Read published scientific papers, science symposia proceedings, and over 350 oral histories about the monument.

bit.ly/GrandStaircaseArchive



Protecting the Grand Canyon

Once and for All

MICHAEL QUINN, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

IT'S TIME TO BAN URANIUM MINING AROUND THE PARK FOREVER

By Rep. Raúl Grijalva

Every year, Grand Canyon National Park attracts millions of visitors from across the world with its temple-like buttes, turquoise waterfalls, and colorful rock walls. But before it was a park, the Grand Canyon was home to Native peoples who knew this landscape as a spiritual place and a homeland, and many of them still call the canyon home to this day.

You'd think that as the crown jewel of our National Park System and a tribal ancestral homeland, the greater Grand Canyon area would be protected for the benefit of current and future generations. But as we know, the Grand Canyon is not as protected as people assume.

The threat looming over the future of the Grand Canyon—the toxic threat of uranium mining—is not new. Multinational mining conglomerates have long sought to extract nearby stores of uranium regardless of harm to the canyon and the people who live in the region. Since the 1950s, the Grand Canyon area and surrounding Colorado Plateau have been home to at least 22 uranium mills and the majority of all uranium mining activities conducted in the United States.

These mines have left a toxic legacy on the land and local tribal communities. Nearly one in five uranium mines is located within 6 miles of a Native American reservation, and more than three quarters of them are situated within 50 miles of a reservation. On the Navajo Nation alone, estimates suggest that there have been more than 1,000 uranium mines since modern extraction methods began. More than 500 of these mines have been abandoned and remain in need of cleanup.

When I visited the Navajo Nation in 2019 to hear about the impacts of uranium mining on the people there, former miners described their physical suffering and failing health in the years since leaving the industry. One panelist shared how he was diagnosed with lung cancer after spending years without being provided sufficient warning or proper protections. His family members were exposed when handling his work clothes.

These stories of exploitation, illness, and abandonment are not the exception. They're the norm. This is the real legacy of uranium mining in the Southwest. Today, women and newborn babies exhibit higher levels of uranium in their bodies than people in other parts of the country. More than a quarter of Navajo Nation residents participating in one study recently tested positive for high levels of uranium.

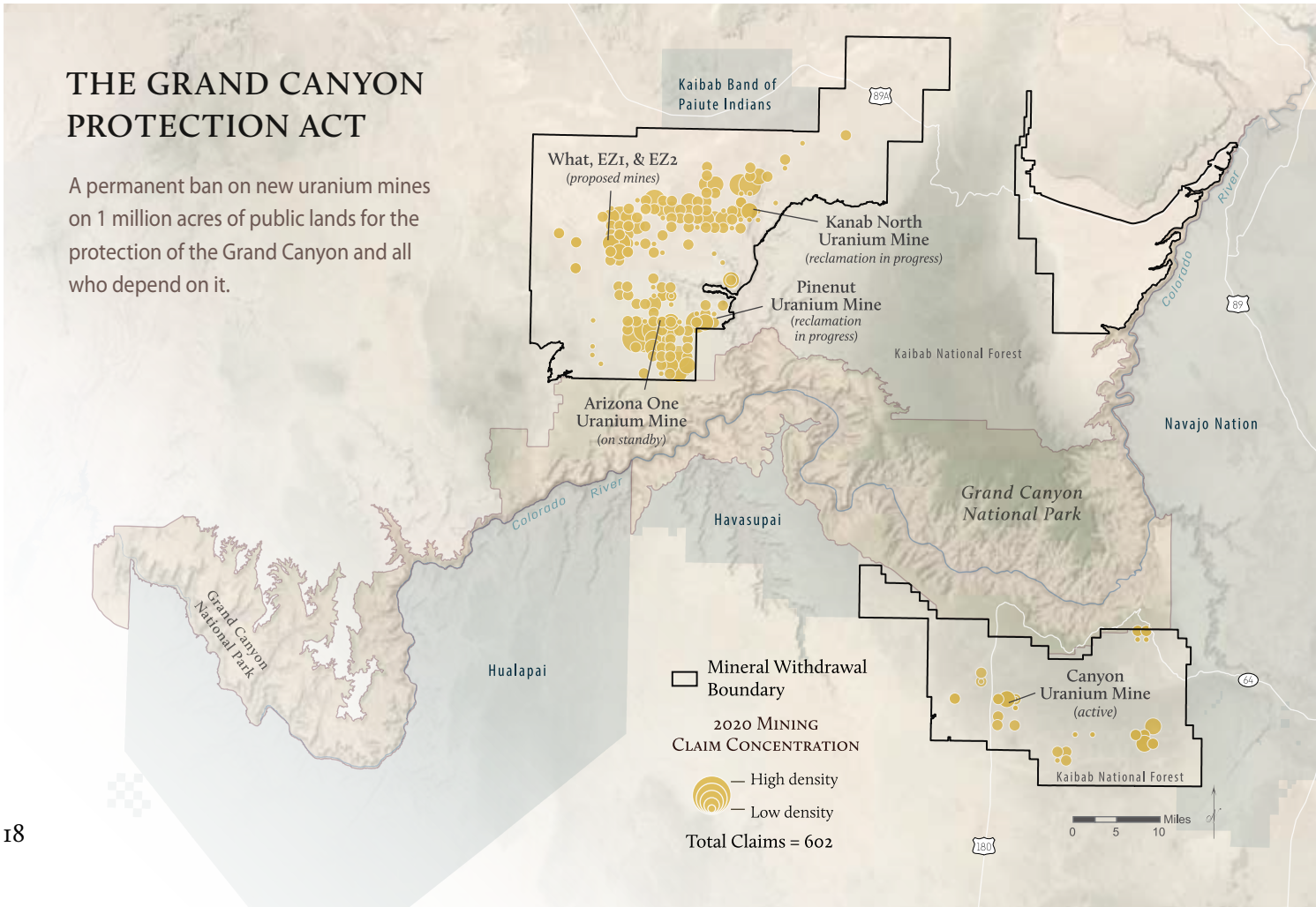
The threat of mining pollution is acute for the Grand Canyon itself, and for the Havasupai Tribe who has lived

in the canyon since time immemorial. Several years ago, Canyon Mine operators pierced a groundwater aquifer as part of normal operations, breaking a promise that operations would not disrupt groundwater. Every minute, 16 to 20 gallons of water leaked into the mining shaft which sits above the Redwall-Muav Aquifer, the deep groundwater aquifer that feeds Havasu Creek, its iconic blue-green waterfalls, and Supai Village. In an effort to keep the onsite storage pond from overflowing, operators at Canyon Mine resorted to misting uranium-contaminated water into the air—spraying the surrounding environment with toxic runoff. As a result of the mine operators' broken promise, the sole source of drinking water for the Havasupai is at risk of contamination, and the world-famous Havasu Falls have been put at risk.

The risks posed by uranium mining in the Grand Canyon region go beyond the boundaries of the national park and Indian Country. It is a risk to the entire Colorado River watershed, on which tens of millions of Americans rely. Mining operations threaten to contaminate the seeps and springs that feed the Colorado River, which provides water to nearly 40 million Americans and irrigates 1.8 million acres of land used to grow crops and raise livestock. The threat of uranium contamination has raised significant concern among the agencies responsible for providing water to major cities downstream, leading water managers from Phoenix to Las Vegas to publicly oppose attempts to expand uranium mining in the Grand Canyon region.

Arizonans broadly recognize that the economic and health risks associated with uranium mining in the Grand Canyon region outweigh any potential benefits. Whenever you hear there's a "debate" over the future of the Grand Canyon, remember that 78 percent of Arizonans surveyed in a recent bipartisan poll agreed that recreation and tourism are more important to the future of the state's economy than mining. Moreover, hypothetical future mining profits will go primarily into the pockets of Canadian or British companies who own the vast majority of mining claims.

I first introduced legislation in 2008 to permanently withdraw approximately 1 million acres around the national park from mineral development. This legislation led to the Obama administration instituting a 20-year moratorium on new uranium mining claims on the lands surrounding the canyon, a landmark decision still in effect today. Unfortunately, we're already nearly



halfway to its expiration date. There is no reason to wait until the last minute. We should act now to ensure that this region is permanently protected for future generations.

That's why I introduced the Grand Canyon Protection Act (H.R. 1052), which passed the House on February 26, 2021. The bill would make permanent the existing ban on new mining claims within the withdrawal area. Last Congress, this legislation passed through the House of Representatives with bipartisan support on two separate occasions only to die in the Republican-controlled Senate. This year, protecting this land and the people who rely on it is among my very top priorities, and with the support of Sen. Kyrsten Sinema and Sen. Mark Kelly, I believe we'll see this bill signed into law.

Protecting the Grand Canyon is neither a new phenomenon nor a partisan Democratic initiative. Since 1908, when Republican President Theodore Roosevelt first designated the Grand Canyon as a national monument, it has been protected by at least five major pieces of bipartisan legislation. We hope to build on this legacy of conservation and end any further talk of opening this sacred place to new pollution sources once and for all.

Protecting the world-renowned Grand Canyon landscape is critical to maintaining a healthy tourism and recreation economy in the region. Tourism associated with the Grand Canyon supports the livelihoods of thousands of Americans, contributing $938 million in revenue to gateway communities each year and directly supporting 7,222 jobs. Should the Northern Arizona Mineral Withdrawal be canceled, mining activity would directly support fewer than 300 jobs. Recreation and tourism are simply more powerful economic drivers, especially given that any financial benefits from uranium mining would last 20 years at most.

The Little Colorado River. ADAM HAYDOCK
Tourists boarding a bus at Grand Canyon National Park. MICHAEL QUINN, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Tribal leaders joined Rep. Grijalva for the announcement of the Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act, a bill to permanently ban uranium mining around the national park that passed the House in 2019, but stalled in the Senate. AMY S. MARTIN
A sign warning of radioactive contamination in the Grand Canyon. BLAKE MCCORD

Prioritizing uranium mining over the health and well-being of tribal communities and the tens of millions of Americans who depend on the Colorado River—especially in an area that is home to only 0.2 percent of known domestic uranium resources—is unacceptable. Reckless uranium mining that poisons our communities and threatens our livelihoods cannot be allowed to continue in the Grand Canyon region.

Without a mining ban written into law, the area would be open to dozens of miles of roads and powerlines and potentially hundreds of thousands of ore haul trips—all of which would degrade the sacred and wild character that draws millions of outdoor enthusiasts and visitors to this place. We cannot sacrifice people's lives to empty corporate promises and short-term profits. The Grand Canyon Protection Act ensures that the toxic legacy of uranium mining will end with us, and that the Grand Canyon's immense vistas will be protected for generations to come.

It is high time to address the concerns of local communities and honor the cultural significance of these lands by permanently protecting them.

Congressman Raúl Grijalva has represented Arizona's 3rd congressional district in the U.S. House since 2003 and chairs the House Committee on Natural Resources.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Grand Canyon Protection Act passed the House on February 26, 2021. A similar bill was introduced in the Senate on February 23, 2021.

TIM PETERSON

Tribal Sovereignty as a National Priority

The Promise and Perils of Federal Policy for Native Nations

By Rebecca Tsosie

Interior Secretary Deb Haaland.
FRAN METZLER

Deb Haaland's confirmation as President Biden's secretary of the interior is historic in many ways. As the first Native American secretary of the interior, she will have the opportunity to reshape the department that manages most of the land within the ancestral territories of the 574 federally recognized Indian nations within the United States. As secretary of the interior, Haaland has the unique capacity to reconcile the disparate strands of federal policy to highlight the human right of Native nations to exercise self-determination within their traditional territories.

Within the U.S., and globally, Indigenous peoples represent land-based communities that maintain an intergenerational presence on their ancestral territories. This relationship between people and place has a central role in defining each group's cultural identity and serves as the foundation for a set of values that long enabled the intergenerational sustainability of Indigenous communities. These longstanding relationships have been disrupted by European

The infamous United States Indian Industrial School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where, from 1879 until 1918, over 10,000 Native American children from 140 tribes, taken from their families, were sent for assimilation. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

settlement and colonization of Indigenous territories. Today, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by majority consensus of the U.N. General Assembly in 2007, calls upon global nations to reconcile the historic (and often continuing) harms to Native peoples as they develop their national policies and manage natural resources within their boundaries. For Indigenous peoples, the human right to "self-determination" requires national governments to redress past wrongs and engage in respectful consultation with Native nations to create more fair and equitable contemporary policies.

The U.S. Department of the Interior was established on March 3, 1849 with the comprehensive mission to manage the country's internal affairs, including its "public lands." Interior also houses the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which was moved from the Department of War in 1849. At that time, Native people were not citizens of the United States, nor did they become citizens by virtue of the 14th Amendment, as did African Americans. For most Native Americans, citizenship occurred in 1924, when Congress enacted the Indian Citizenship Act. In the 19th century, Native people had a primary allegiance to their tribal nations, which possessed an independent political sovereignty that predated the United States and was the basis for the treaties that many Native nations had with Great Britain, and, subsequently, with the United States. Native Americans also had a secondary political identity as "wards" of the United States government, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs discharged the duties of a "trustee."

In their capacity as "wards," Native people lacked the basic civil and constitutional rights that were available to U.S. citizens. Throughout the 19th century, the United States appropriated the treaty-guaranteed lands of Native nations for its own use as the "public lands." According to the Supreme Court's 1903 decision in Lonewolf vs. Hitchcock, the U.S. had full authority to take tribal lands even if this abrogated an express Indian treaty right, because treaty abrogation was a "political question" that the Court could not review. The federal "trustee" also appropriated Indian children from their families by force, sending them to distant boarding schools, where they were forbidden to speak their Native languages. Indian parents had no recognized substantive due process right to determine where and how their children would be educated.

The federal "civilization campaign" also justified the infamous 19th-century "Code of Indian Offenses," which criminalized the exercise of Native religious practices and enabled federal agents to seize sacred objects used in Native ceremonial practices.

Farmers at North Leupp Family Farms on the Navajo Nation produce a bountiful crop using traditional dryland-farming techniques honed over generations.

Indigenous knowledge-holders often maintain significant expertise about the health of the land, water, and environment. This knowledge may be the key to human survival in the Southwest...

Many of those items still resided in federal agency and museum collections as of 1990, along with over 200,000 sets of Native American human remains that had been "collected" as "specimens" in a set of dehumanizing 19th-century federal policies. In 1990, after a series of disturbing congressional hearings, Congress passed the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act to facilitate the return of Native human remains and cultural objects to the culturally affiliated tribal governments.

In 1970, federal policy shifted from a paternalistic view of tribal self-government to a more robust recognition of tribal "self-determination." The federal government is still the trustee, but the sovereignty of Indian nations now has a defined character under federal law and policy. Each federal administration, however, has latitude to foster a substantive vision of tribal sovereignty or to offer more symbolic recognition, largely served by a procedural version of "consultation" that allows federal land managers to control lands and resources in a way that benefits other values, such as recreational or extractive uses. The last four years, for example, witnessed an attempt by federal policymakers to "downsize" national monuments and "upscale" development of oil and gas on federal public lands. All too often, tribal consultation was purely a symbolic gesture.

President Biden has promised to strengthen the nation-to-nation relationship between federally recognized tribal governments and the United States, promoting robust consultation on federal actions that would impact tribal interests. President Biden has also promised to strengthen tribal self-government and restore tribal lands, as well as safeguard the natural and cultural resources of Native nations.

Currently, tribal governments maintain beneficial ownership of approximately 56 million acres of land, which is held by the United States "in trust" for the Native nations. This is a fraction of the ancestral territories of Native nations and there are many cultural sites of great significance on federal public lands. In many cases, tribal trust lands are adjacent to federal public lands, and the contiguous forests, common watersheds, and associated cultural sites require collaborative management between tribal governments and federal agencies. Bears Ears National Monument in southern Utah is one of those sites, and then-President Barack Obama's 2016 proclamation adopted a notable approach to collaborative management with the establishment of an intertribal commission that would participate with the designated federal agency representatives to formulate the applicable management policies.

In an era of climate change, federal policymakers could benefit from collaborative management with Native nations, including recognition that Indigenous knowledge-holders often maintain significant expertise about the health of the land, water, and environment. This knowledge may be the key to human survival in the Southwest, where drought conditions are intensifying. Today, Native peoples in the region are on the front lines of the climate crisis and the intersectional challenges associated with poverty, health vulnerability, and environmental contamination from the development of fossil fuel and uranium resources on tribal lands and contiguous public lands.

In the Four Corners region, the Navajo Nation and Hopi Tribe share a common interest in sustainability, given the significant degradation of land and water caused by many decades of coal mining on their reservation lands, as well as the depletion and contamination of groundwater in the underlying aquifer. These two Indigenous nations have distinctive cultures, languages, and histories, and yet both share a central belief about the importance of land and water to the survival of their people. Both cultures recognize the sacred nature of water, and the need to protect the

integrity of the groundwater, springs, and rivers that allow life to flourish in an arid climate.

Today, the Navajo and Hopi nations are among those that seek to block a Phoenix-based private corporation from building four dams on and above a tributary to the Little Colorado River, which would pump groundwater to fill the hydropower project's reservoirs. The stated goal of the "Big Canyon Pumped Hydro Storage Project" is to store "surplus electricity" and support "electric grid reliability," ultimately allowing storage of 3,600 megawatts of electricity. This is deemed important for "industrial users" of electricity in the Southwest, given the recent closure of the Navajo Generating Station, which was the West's largest power plant before its closure in 2019. Under this plan, which is awaiting preliminary permit approval from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), groundwater in the area would be used instrumentally to service the energy needs of Western cities, just as Navajo and Hopi lands were used for coal mining.

The environmental and cultural harms of the dam project would be significant. The project would flood several miles of canyons on the Navajo Nation, which have longstanding cultural and historical value, and would submerge highly sacred places that feature in the origin stories and ceremonial traditions of several tribal nations. The U.S. Department of the Interior has joined tribal governments in opposing the plan, acknowledging that the dam project would adversely affect at least 10 federally recognized tribal governments with its substantial impacts on the land, water, and cultural resources of the area.

What about tribal sovereignty? The dam project would be located on the Navajo Reservation, so the political sovereignty of the Navajo Nation is clearly implicated. Under the Federal Power Act, FERC has the power to license private hydro dams on reservation lands. But this must be consistent with the federal government's trust obligation to avoid undue harm to tribal lands and resources. The project would call for scrutiny under all of the environmental and cultural resources statutes, and the Department of the Interior is required to consult with tribes and issue conditions to mitigate harms. If it does not, it could be liable for damages for breach of trust. The Navajo Nation sought to intervene in the FERC process, asserting that tribal consultation is needed prior to issuance of the permit. However, despite opposition from the Navajo Nation and other tribes, FERC decided to issue preliminary permits for two previously proposed hydropower projects along the Little Colorado River anyway, apparently accepting the developers' argument that the projects would provide revenue to the Navajo Nation, and punting tribal consultation until the later licensing stage. We're likely to see the same thing happen with the Big Canyon proposal.

These dam projects would also forever change the character of the confluence of the Little Colorado River and the Colorado River. This confluence site is widely regarded as sacred by all of the tribal nations that have cultural associations with this region, including the Navajo Nation, Hopi Tribe, Havasupai Tribe, Hualapai Tribe, and the Zuni Pueblo. These Indigenous nations continue to exert their "cultural sovereignty" to protect their ancestral sites and the longstanding narratives that counsel each nation to safeguard the land and water for future generations. The act of pumping pristine groundwater to serve the hydro project's reservoirs is a further act of desecration and one that would destroy the precious springs that nurture the Hopi people in their centuries-long practice of dry farming. Hopi farmers possess the knowledge to grow corn in a natural environment that would otherwise require the use of irrigation systems.

Former Hopi tribal chairman and former Grand Canyon Trust board member, Vernon Masayesva, now directs the Black Mesa Trust, a nonprofit entity organized to protect tribal water. Masayesva says that, within the Hopi worldview, "all waters—rivers, groundwaters, glaciers…are interconnected, because the Earth is like a human body and we survive with all the hundreds of bloodlines circulating through all of our body." Under this view, the federal government and its private corporate beneficiaries have an obligation to restore the lands and waters of the area that have been jeopardized by decades of harmful federal policies. The "Western mind" sees water as a "commodity," says Masayesva, whereas "the Hopi culture and religion is inseparably linked to water."

After centuries of exploitive practices and policies, what will it take to heal the land, and ourselves? We must imagine a better future in order to realize that future. In the process, we must commit to recognize the cultural and political sovereignty of Native nations as they work to restore, preserve, and protect the land, forests, and waters within their traditional territories. This is a new era of federal policy and the leadership of tribal members at the federal executive, legislative, and judicial levels will be important to the future of this country and its diverse constituent communities.

Rebecca Tsosie is a board member of the Grand Canyon Trust, and a regents professor of law at the University of Arizona.

Rising Leader SPOTLIGHT

Nadira Mitchell

Tucson, AZ

YOU JOINED US IN 2020 FOR LEADERSHIFT. WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO THE RISING LEADERS PROGRAM?

I was interested in talking with people my age about issues in the Southwest and making sure the Indigenous perspective is heard. LeaderShift was super interesting because this is not something you learn in a classroom. If you're a STEM major you don't get to learn the people's history of the land. You can always learn more from other people and being able to talk to others about the land is super important in an educational journey.

WHAT WAS YOUR INSPIRATION FOR GETTING INVOLVED IN CONSERVATION AS A YOUNG PERSON?

I live in a dry desert and I remember the snails during monsoon season and seeing them made me realize that there's deeper connections in natural areas. I used to tally mark the number of snails and that was my first interaction with wildlife or taking part in a somewhat scientific method. My family also instilled many traditional Navajo teachings about wildlife, respect for animals, and other life. I was always taught never to be afraid of bugs, or bees, or spiders, and even the ants.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE?

I am currently a sophomore at the University of Arizona majoring in natural resources with an emphasis in wildlife conservation management and minoring in American Indian studies. I hope to be a natural resources manager specifically with wildlife. Another dream is to pursue a Ph.D. and work for the Navajo Nation within conservation, or act as a tribal liaison for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I'm really excited to see what opportunities will arise for me! I just want to work in conservation, with wildlife, and integrate traditional Indigenous knowledge. I want to make sure tribes have a seat at the table when working on land management in conservation.

WHO IS YOUR CONSERVATION OR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE HERO AND WHY?

My mom. She works in public health and I feel like most of my values come from her and that's because of her teachings and her family's teachings. Even though she is not directly involved in the conservation movement, her teachings are why I want to give back to my communities and back to the environment.

The Grand Canyon Trust's Rising Leaders Program brings young people together to build leadership, advocacy, and professional skills and work toward creating a more just and sustainable future for the Colorado Plateau. Learn more at **grandcanyontrust.org/rising-leaders**

RISING LEADERS
GRAND CANYON TRUST

The Road Ahead

NEW ADMINISTRATION, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

by Travis Bruner

Lately, when I sit down with a cup of coffee and my laptop first thing in the morning, I'm struck by a palpable sense of the uncharted nature of these times. It's similar to a feeling of renewal, but things are not returning to how they used to be. We're stepping through an entrance—a gateway. We've been tried and tested, and we came out on the other side.

Bighorn sheep in Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. BLAKE MCCORD

Between the COVID-19 pandemic and a level of chaos bordering on the surreal in Washington D.C., distinguishing last year from an apocalyptic science fiction movie was not always easy. While the virus has touched the lives of many of us across the Colorado Plateau, Native communities have been disproportionately affected, another consequence of the legacy of economic and environmental racism that has limited access to healthcare, running water, and other key infrastructure. At the Trust, we necessarily adjusted our foci and did what we could to support the physical and economic health of the communities in which we work. But with a new administration, a new Congress, and vaccines for COVID-19, we're feeling optimistic about the future. It teems with possibility.

While the political careers of President Biden and Vice President Harris to present did not focus on environmental justice or conservation, early executive orders and political appointments show a deep commitment to these values. They have heard the people, including Greta Thunberg, George Floyd, and the Tohono O'odham women leading protests at the border wall. The appointments of Rep. Deb Haaland as secretary of the interior and Brenda Mallory as head of the Council on Environmental Quality, and new commitments like adding a staff position dedicated to environmental justice at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission are early signifiers of what's to come. The era of a targeted (and scattershot) onslaught against environmental protections by the Trump administration that often forced us into a reactive stance is over, and the new White House is devoted to new ways of thinking.

On his first day in office, President Biden issued an executive order beginning a 60-day review of the boundaries and conditions of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments to determine "whether restoration of the monument boundaries and conditions that existed as of January 20, 2017, would be appropriate." While we and our partners of course want a prompt restoration of the monument boundaries, this move represents enormous progress in the right direction.

The 60 days create a space for the administration to get it right, through essential conversations between the White House and tribal leaders regarding the right boundaries and

The Trust will advocate that the federal government devote itself to working with tribal nations toward an expansion of federal-intertribal collaborative management and Indigenous involvement in decision-making on ancestral lands that are now public lands across the Colorado Plateau, including the Grand Canyon region.

priorities for Bears Ears. Those discussions between sovereign governments are a necessary prerequisite to securing the most permanent land designation possible, and a federal-intertribal collaborative management framework that solidifies Indigenous involvement in decision-making on ancestral lands in the region.

At the Trust, we're advocating for the most complete and permanent restorations of both monuments, working in support of tribal nations and alongside our nonprofit partners, through conversations and written communication with officials in the administration, in court, and in the media. Once restored, not only will lands be protected, but we hope the durability of land designations will be affirmed. With those lines back on the map, we will turn our attention to advocating for the most culturally and ecologically sound management of those landscapes.

At Grand Staircase-Escalante, we're emphasizing restoration of the monument's original science-centered vision and permanent closure of livestock grazing across the 27,000 acres that were closed prior to the Trump administration's actions. As conservationists, we hold grazing permits to run a few cattle on the monument, keeping the number of animals as low as possible to protect the soil from trampling and keep native plants intact. Because of that role, we have a unique interest in and perspective on improving grazing management there. In the coming years, we will make our case that all options for reducing grazing are on the table especially in light of climate change and associated drought. Also, we're going to remind folks at the federal Bureau of Land Management, which manages the monument, that pinyon and juniper forests belong out there and shouldn't be clear-cut or even selectively thinned without attention to cultural resources and pinyon jay habitat.

Once the boundaries and collaborative management framework are in place at Bears Ears, we'll support the tribes of the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition and the federal government by providing on-the-ground expertise to help inform the best decisions about how to protect the area's natural wonders and living cultural resources, from petroglyphs to native plants to bighorn sheep to desert springs.

The Bears Ears federal-intertribal collaborative-management model has applicability beyond this landscape. It's kindling to fuel the fire of the hearth around which tribes, the federal government, conservationists, and others can come together to warm ourselves in a public-lands future that prioritizes justice and honors the deep cultural ties that connect Native peoples to their ancestral lands. The Trust will advocate that the federal government devote itself to working with tribal nations toward an expansion of federal-intertribal collaborative management and Indigenous involvement in decision-making on ancestral lands that are now public lands across the Colorado Plateau, including the Grand Canyon region.

In other inspiring signs from the new administration and new Congress, a permanent legislative ban on new uranium mining claims on 1 million acres of public lands around the Grand Canyon is imminent. After years of working closely with elected officials, the Havasupai Tribe, and other nonprofits to craft and advocate for this ban, we believe we are on the cusp. On February 26, 2021, the Protecting America's Wilderness and Public Lands Act, a legislative package that included the ban, passed the House of Representatives with bipartisan support. A Grand Canyon mining ban bill, the Grand Canyon Protection Act, has already been introduced in the Senate. When the time is right, our energy director, Amber Reimondo, will head back to Capitol Hill and remind our representatives in Congress which way the scale tips when the Grand Canyon is on one side and low-quality uranium ore is on the other. With a little luck, the ban will not only pass the Senate and be signed into law by the president, but lead Congress to reconsider the 1872 mining law that encourages people to view public lands as a resource to plunder for private profit.

Climate change is inextricably woven into the economic, cultural, and ecological future of the plateau, and we expect to make gains in the next few years to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through federal regulation. Already, President Biden reestablished the Interagency Working Group on the Social Cost of Greenhouse Gases. In our region, that body's work could help discourage polluting projects like the proposed Enefit oil shale development in Utah. Meanwhile, our staff attorney Michael Toll will keep fighting it in court.

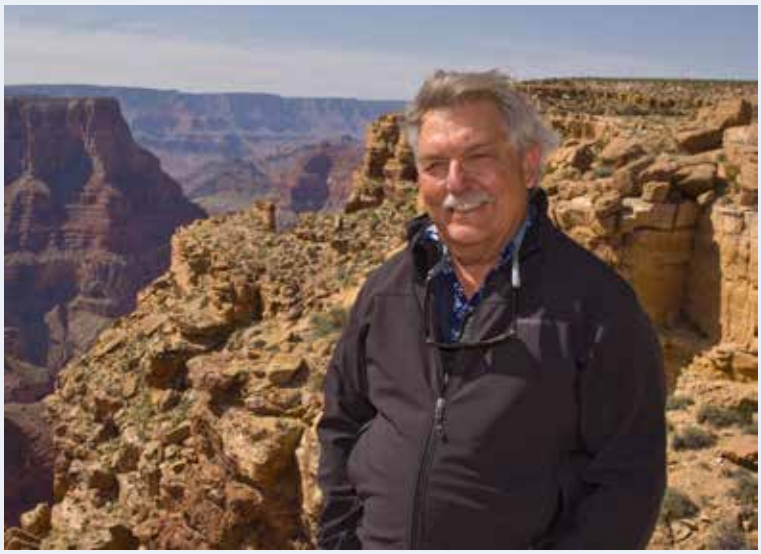
The Citadel, Bears Ears National Monument. BOB WICK, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Beyond the progress that has already come into view, enormous opportunities for our work on the Colorado Plateau lie ahead. The Biden administration has committed to lofty conservation goals, including protecting 30 percent of the country's lands and oceans by 2030, and reversing regulatory rollbacks of bedrock environmental laws like the National Environmental Policy Act. We will hold the federal government accountable to those commitments and employ these laws to safeguard against projects that could deplete precious groundwater at the Grand Canyon, like the Stilo mega-resort development proposed for Tusayan, near the gateway to the national park.

To recover from a pandemic with deep economic repercussions, the new administration and Congress will likely be forced to measure conservation actions in economic terms. Legislative and regulatory safeguards for the environment often present long-term economic benefits, and it's our job to put it in those terms for civil servants and elected officials in Washington, D.C. For example, we'll stand behind the Navajo Nation, Hopi Tribe, Hualapai Tribe, U.S. Department of the Interior, and others in continuing to oppose developments like the proposed dams on the Little Colorado River. These dams would harm cultural resources and threaten critical habitat for the endangered humpback chub, and Sarana Riggs, our Grand Canyon manager, won't be backing down. At the same time, because job opportunities are needed in the region, we'll collaborate with the Navajo Nation and the National Park Service in pursuing long-term regenerative economic opportunities for Native-owned ecotourism businesses at the Grand Canyon, where recreational visitation rises as reliably as the sun.

With stability returned to the Capitol, conservation progress accelerates. The Trump era brought regulatory rollbacks in direct opposition to our mission to safeguard the wonders of the Grand Canyon and the Colorado Plateau, while supporting the rights of its Native peoples. After 2020, it's hard not to feel a bit hesitant about the apparent opportunity before us, as if the world is a table that might crumble to the floor as soon as we sit down. But this table is solid, and we're charting a course with our allies upon it. The opportunities are real, and we cannot hesitate. Maybe one of the legs of the table needs a shim or two to make it level, but it's ready to hold a full meal for all of us to share. I have just the thing for it: fresh coffee. Here we go. Let's level this thing out and get rollin.'

As conservation director, Travis Bruner oversees advocacy work across the Grand Canyon Trust.



TOM BEAN

HAPPY TRAILS TO A GRAND ADVOCATE

After decades of service on behalf of the Grand Canyon and the Colorado Plateau, the legendary **ROGER CLARK** has retired from his post as Grand Canyon director. We are forever grateful to Roger for his steadfast devotion to conservation and environmental justice during his long tenure.

Roger was one of the Grand Canyon Trust's first employees, and thanks to his early work on air and noise pollution around the Grand Canyon, he helped the Trust establish itself as a permanent presence on the Colorado Plateau. Throughout the years, Roger has provided key leadership on several of our biggest conservation wins, including an agreement to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions at Navajo Generating Station and the 20-year ban on new uranium mines around the Grand Canyon. He has also supported Native communities in their efforts to permanently protect the Little Colorado River region.

Stacks of newspapers, books, and articles filled his office—fitting for a man with an encyclopedic knowledge of the Colorado Plateau. Ask Roger a "quick question" and you invariably got treated to a rich history lesson, the kind that only comes from a long career and lifetime of devotion to the people, communities, and wild places of the Colorado Plateau. We will sorely miss Roger's breadth of experience and expertise.

Thank you, Roger, for all the laughs, insights, advocacy, river stories, and heart you've given to our Trust family throughout the years. You are, forever and always, a teacher, mentor, trusted partner, advocate, supporter, and friend.

The Public Lands

A Look Back and Ahead

By John Leshy

WITH A NEW ADMINISTRATION in the nation's capital, it is a good time to take a quick look back at the long history of America's public lands to see what it may tell us about the future. By public lands, I mean those managed by the four major agencies—the Forest Service, Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Land Management.

The Trump administration compiled the worst public lands record of any presidential administration since the Civil War. It concentrated on two things: first, turning as many public lands as possible over to the fossil fuel industry in a futile attempt to stop its inevitable decline; and second, undoing or weakening protections for public lands everywhere it could, such as severely downsizing Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments.

The good news is that nearly all of Trump's regressive actions were done solely through executive power. Thus they can be, and are being, reversed by the Biden administration.

RICK GOLDWASSER

Not all the news is good. The Trump administration's relentless assault on science and on the federal agencies looking after these lands will be harder to undo. Four years were lost in facing the daunting challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss. And little was done to deal with the dramatic rise in recreational use of public lands, which has put more burdens on already stretched managers and aging infrastructure.

Some libertarians deride the public lands as "political lands." While they use the label scornfully, they are right—the political process has always determined the fate of these lands. Although many in today's sour, cynical atmosphere are quick to conclude that our political process never produces good results, the public lands have long furnished a conspicuous counterexample. Viewed broadly, they are a political and governmental success story, an institution justly celebrated by a large majority of Americans.

Two characteristics have long marked the political decisions the nation has made regarding these lands. First, they have almost never involved sharp divisions along political party lines. Second, the trend of these decisions has been remarkably consistent—nearly always to preserve more and more lands and to hold them open to all for recreation, education, science, and conservation of biodiversity and cultural resources.

From the beginning, America's public lands were an instrument of national unity—except from the viewpoint of Native peoples dispossessed by the European invaders. The formation of the first national government after the Declaration of Independence was stymied for years by a dispute among the 13 former colonies. Seven of them claimed vast amounts of land west of the Appalachians based on vague language in their colonial charters. The remaining six had fixed western boundaries and feared that they would be dominated by the land-rich seven. The dispute ended when the seven with western land claims—placing the nation's unity above their individual interests—agreed to cede them to the national government. These were our nation's first public lands.

Over the next several decades, the nation used them, and others it acquired from foreign governments and Native Americans, to build and hold the nation together as Euro-American settlement extended across the continent, and new states were admitted to the union.

During this era, Native Americans lost nearly all their lands. The process almost always followed this sequence. First, a changing cast of characters—speculators, squatters, miners, railroads, developers, timber and livestock operators—dispossessed them, usually through coercion, sometimes violence, and often backed by the U.S. military. Then, the U.S. acquired formal title to the lands through arrangements that, while providing Native Americans some compensation, could never be enough to make up for the enormity of their loss.

The powerful political movement to set aside significant amounts of public lands for broad protective purposes did not flower until years—often, many years—after the U.S. acquired title to them from the Native Americans. Congress protected Yosemite in 1864 and Yellowstone in 1872, but it was not until the last decade of the 19th century that Congress kicked off what became a long string of decisions to hold onto, and protect for general public enjoyment, hundreds of millions of acres of public lands.

How these decisions were made has been widely misunderstood. Many people, especially in the American West, subscribe to the myth that most of today's public lands resulted from a land grab by the national government strongly resisted by states and local communities.

The truth is very different. The decisions the U.S. government made to safeguard these lands almost always had strong local support. By the time Congress decided in 1891 to give the

Indian Creek area, Bears Ears National Monument. BOB WICK, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

president broad power to reserve public lands in what were eventually labeled national forests, all of the Western states except Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico had been admitted into the union, and none of their representatives in Congress objected.

One of those representatives was Montana congressman Thomas Carter. Later that year President Benjamin Harrison made Carter the head of the General Land Office—the government agency then in charge of practically all the public lands. Carter was the first person from a Western state to hold the post. Under his leadership, the office put a hold on all transfers of land out of U.S. ownership in the upper parts of watersheds all over the West, consulted with local citizens, and formulated recommendations to the president regarding how much land to put in what were then known as "forest reserves."

The next several presidents, Republican and Democrat, set aside most of what is now the national forest system, almost always with strong support in the region. Theodore Roosevelt was the most vigorous in using that power. In the 1904 presidential election, he handily carried every Western state—hardly a reflection of discontent. In fact, during this era, Congress never made any effort to undo any of Roosevelt's extensive protective actions, and itself took action several times, with strong local support, to protect specific areas of public lands.

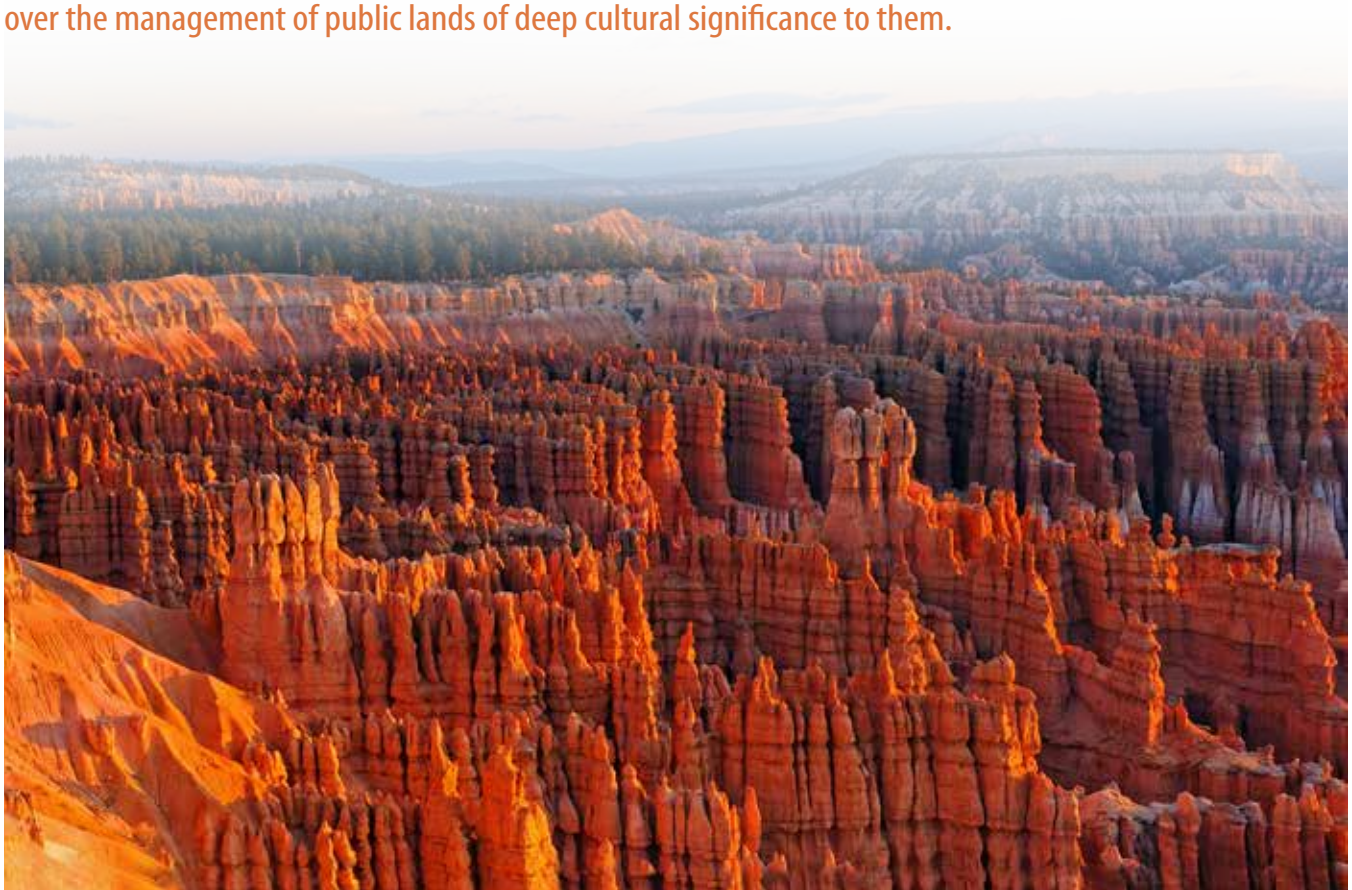
That Congress took such steps only with local support illustrates a fundamental feature of the legislative process. It almost never acts to protect, or authorize the executive to protect, public lands without the approval, or at least the acquiescence, of the members of Congress representing the affected area. This de facto veto power held by local representatives is because few members of Congress who represent other places are willing to ignore their objections, for fear that next time the tables could be turned on them.

Examples of this are found all over the country. Iconic national parks like the Great Smoky Mountains and the Everglades in the southeast and Big Bend in Texas exist because the states and local citizens acquired the lands and donated them to the national government to be protected. Similarly, the U.S. government acquired and protected the White and Green Mountain national forests in New England because state and local leaders asked it to do so.

All these initiatives had strong support on both sides of the aisle. Grover Cleveland, a Democrat, first protected what became Crater Lake National Park in Oregon at the request of the state's leading Republicans, including the governor and members of the state's congressional delegation. Republican presidents Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover first protected Glacier Bay in Alaska and Death Valley in California, respectively. President Eisenhower's interior secretary, Fred Seaton, first protected the multi-million acre Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska.

Despite this history, some have regarded the so-called "sagebrush rebellion" in the late 1970s as proof that the public lands are a flash point for partisan and sectional conflict. Again, the facts are to the contrary. The "rebellion" was never taken seriously by Congress. It is true that the brief tenure of Ronald Reagan's first interior secretary, James Watt, a libertarian, was marked by his strenuous efforts to open up wilderness areas onshore, and practically all offshore lands, to the oil and gas industry. But Watt was rebuffed by

Over the past 40 years, Congress has continued to enact, with strong bipartisan support, legislation protecting more public lands. Congress and the executive have also expended billions of dollars to acquire and protect even more land, and, importantly, have taken steps to give Native Americans more influence over the management of public lands of deep cultural significance to them.



bipartisan opposition in Congress and in the affected states, and became a political liability. Reagan quickly steered back to the middle on public lands issues. Indeed, before he left office he had signed legislation putting more acres of public land in the lower 48 states into the National Wilderness Preservation System than any other president.

It is also true that in modern times more Republicans than Democrats use rhetoric hostile to the public lands, and the Republican Party's platform has sometimes included planks that called for selling off many public lands. But that posturing doesn't change the facts. Over the past 40 years, Congress has continued to enact, with strong bipartisan support, legislation protecting more public lands. Congress and the executive have also expended billions of dollars to acquire and protect even more land, and, importantly, have taken steps to give Native Americans more influence over the management of public lands of deep cultural significance to them.

These actions are not part of some nefarious socialist plot. Rather, they simply show our political process working as it was designed to work, where the national government responds to public opinion by translating it into laws. To be sure—as on practically every issue where a broad consensus supports governmental action—there is a small if sometimes noisy group of dissenters, hostile to just about everything the government does. But for years every poll in every region of the nation has shown that a large majority of the public wants more and better-protected public lands. People are, moreover, voting with their feet, as recreational visits to public lands have shot up in recent years.

This trend continued even in the Trump era. Republican John Curtis steered legislation through Congress in 2019 that established new protections for several hundred thousand acres of public lands in his southern Utah district. These lands were, ironically, not far from the 1.35 million acre Bears Ears National Monument that President Obama established in 2016 and President Trump shrank by nearly 90 percent in 2017. With the Trump administration winding down, Congress fundamentally strengthened the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Established in 1964, the fund provides a stream of money, derived primarily from public land mineral development revenues, for federal, state, and local government agencies to buy more land for conservation and recreation. But as originally designed, it required Congress to renew the fund periodically, and to enact legislation each year in order to spend money accruing to it. The result was that, between 1965 and 2019, Congress spent less than half of the more than $40 billion the fund earned. With strong bipartisan support, Congress made it permanent in 2019, and in 2020 made it a true revolving fund, permitting its revenues to be spent as they accrued.

All this has set the stage for the Biden administration to deepen and strengthen the long tradition of protecting one of America's finest and most beloved institutions, its public lands.

John Leshy, emeritus professor at U.C. Hastings College of the Law, serves on the board of the Grand Canyon Trust. He was general counsel of the Interior Department from 1993 to 2001. This essay draws on themes developed in his political history of America's public lands, "Our Common Ground," forthcoming from Yale University Press.

Bryce Canyon National Park. RICK GOLDWASSER

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GRAND CANYON TRUST LEGACY CIRCLE

A Perfect Day at the Canyon

CHRISTINE ROY

ED KEABLE MAY BE A NEWCOMER TO THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, but he's no stranger to its mission. As a young man, Keable stood on the rim of the Grand Canyon, thinking it would be a remarkable place to live, work, and work toward preserving. That idea simmered in Keable's mind throughout his 23-year career as an attorney for the Department of the Interior. When Keable was asked to step into the role of superintendent for Grand Canyon National Park last year, it took him a split second to accept.

DEIDRA PEACHES

A year into the job, Keable is enjoying getting to know his new backyard. He jokes that his favorite place is the South Kaibab Trailhead, a welcome sight after a grueling hike out from Phantom Ranch. Keable makes a point to walk along the rim and soak in the views every day as a source of inspiration and reminder of his responsibilities as superintendent. Meet the man charged with preserving the Grand Canyon for you and future generations.

What's a day in the life of a superintendent like?

Some of my days are jam-packed with meetings, talking about issues for the Grand Canyon and the National Park Service. But I try to build time into my schedule to get out into the park. It's important to me as superintendent that I know this park. And really the only way you can know the park is being in the park. So I've hiked extensively into the canyon. I'm about to go on my first river trip. I'm trying to experience the park, engage with staff, talk to them about what challenges they face on the ground. I try to mix it up as best as I can.

What are the biggest threats to Grand Canyon National Park right now?

Climate change is one of our great threats. We have mining operations in the area that have impacts that I'm learning about. There are private development opportunities here that I want to study carefully, as they may impact operations at the Grand Canyon. And we have internal challenges I have to address—the history of sexual harassment here at the Grand Canyon, and, more broadly, the park service. There are always budget and staffing challenges that we have to make sure we're managing for the future.

How has the pandemic impacted Grand Canyon National Park?

For a period of time during the pandemic, we were at about 35 percent visitor rates. We've averaged out to about 50 percent of our visitor rates. As I've talked to some of the tribal leaders in the area, they have educated me about their perspective about the canyon and the river being living entities. And they have advocated for giving the canyon a rest. So I think the canyon, to the extent that it needs a rest—and that's an understandable and interesting concept—it's getting that kind of a rest right now.

As the superintendent, I have to think about what that means for the future. A significant part of our budget comes from fees we collect from visitors and from our concessionaires. Our budget has been cut significantly by the reductions in visitors, which has forced some difficult decisions of balancing a budget while trying to be responsible managers of the resource.

What can people do to help protect the Grand Canyon?

I think the first thing people can do is learn about the canyon. Come to the canyon, get an experience. My first experience here was in 1994 as a tourist, and I just walked up to the rim and had an overwhelming sense of awe. Tribal leaders and tribal members on staff have told me about the important cultural and spiritual aspects of this place to them. And even though I'm Catholic, I feel deep spirituality in this place. There are lessons to be learned here about history, about culture, about resource protection.

Looking forward, what opportunities do you see for the park to better preserve the natural and cultural values of the Grand Canyon?

Congress passed last year the Great American Outdoors Act that has made available billions of dollars of new appropriated funds. We're working with the regional office to fund our science program better than we have in the past. And we're developing some really interesting education and interpretative programs to highlight the importance of this place from Indigenous perspectives. We have a project starting with the watchtower in our Desert View area, where we're working with the 11 affiliated tribes to reimagine interpretation of the Grand Canyon from Indigenous perspectives.

What's your idea of a perfect day at the Grand Canyon?

My perfect day at the Grand Canyon is hiking into the canyon with staff and learning from them. I had a great day, my husband was visiting, and my paleontology team took us and one of my deputy superintendents on a field briefing. They were explaining how they use modern equipment to locate and identify locations of fossils in the park. And for a portion of the hike, we did a fossil search. The deputy division chief for our science resource management division and my husband both found fossils that were 270 million years old! We were able to add those to the collection for the park, and that was just a great day.

What's your go-to ice cream flavor after hiking down the Bright Angel Trail?

It's got to be chocolate.

GRAND CANYON TRUST

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JENN WOOD

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